

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 01789 260727Z

54

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05 USSS-00 /081 W

----- 033965

R 251715Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7831

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1789

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS/ PFOR, NI, DM

SUBJ: DAHOMEAN COMMANDO RAID ON LAGOS

REF LAGOS 11620 (REPEATED AS COTONOU 1784 TO LOME AND PARIS)

1. VERSION OF KIDNAP ATTEMPT WE PICKED UP HERE NOV 20 AND HAD BEEN TRYING TO CHECK OUT WAS AS FOLLOWS: AF FEW DAYS EALIER SEVERAL DAHHOMEANS TOUGHS ENTERED THE DAHOMEAN EMBASSY IN LAGOS AND PRESENTED TO EMBASSY OFFICER ABEL ZINSOU A WRITTEN ORDER SIGNED BY PRES KEREKOU AUTHORIZING THEM TO SEARCH THE EMBASSY. AFTER THEY DID SO, AND HELPED THEMSELVES TO SOME OF THE FILES, THEY ORDERD THE YOUNG ZINSOU TO RETURN TO DAHOMEY WITH THEM. BUT SINCE THEIR CAR COULD NOT HOLD ALL OF THEM, THEY MADE HIM DRIVE HIS OWN CAR WHICH THEY FOLLOWED IN THEIR OWN. THEN THEY REACHED THE COUNTRYSIDE TO THE WEST OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF LAGOS, ZINSOU SOMEHOW DITCHED HIS ABD-UCTORS AND FLED INTO THE BUSH.

2. WE HAVE SOUGHT TO CONFIRM THE STORY WITH OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE NIGERIAN EMBASSY, WHICH WAS PROBABLY THE POINT OF ORIGIN OF THE STORY THAT CAME TO US, BUT THEY CLAIM TO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE AFFAIR. BY NOV 21 THE INCIDENT
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PAGE 02 COTONO 01789 260727Z

WAS IN THE COTONOU RUMOR CIRCUIT.

3. COMMENT: BELIEVE THIS COMMANDO RAID, WHICH WAS VERY LIKELY ARRANGED BY COMMUNIST INTERIOR MIN AZONHIHO, HAD AS ITS OBJECTS (A) PUTTING THE EMBASSY OUT OF BUSINESS AS A CENTER FOR PRO-ZINSOU INTRIGUE, (B) SEIZING DOCUMENTS TO BE USED AGAINST FORMER DAHOMEAN AMB TO NIGERIA JACQUES ADANDE, WHO IS NOW REPORTEDLY UNDER ARREST HERE AS AN ALLEGED ZINSOUIST COUP PLOTTER, AND (C) GETTING ONE OF THE ZINSOU BROTHERS FOR USE AS A HOSTAGE, AND/OR POSSIBLY AS A PRINCIPAL DEFENDENT IN ANOTHER KANGAROO TRAIL WHICH MAY TAKE PLACE SOON. (THIS CONNECTION COTONOU IS FULL OF REPORTS THAT THE GOVT IS BUILDING UP A "CASE" AGAINST PLOTTERS AND THAT EXECUTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE EARLY DEC.)

4. ABOVE-DESCRIBED INCIDENT COULD BE RELATED TO "CRASH" TRIP THAT FORNMIN ALLADAYE APPARENTLY TOOK TO LAGOS ON OR ABOUT NOV 13. A CHIEF OF MISSION HERE WHO HAD APPOINTMENT WITH THE MINISTER EARLY THAT MORNING (WE BELIEVE THE DATE WAS NOV 13) WAS INFORMED ON ARRIVAL BY A PROTOCOL OFFICIAL THAT THE MINISTER CONVOCED SOME OF HIS STAFF AT 2300 THE PREVIOUS EVENING TO ASSIST HIM IN PREPARING A TRIP TO LAGOS FOR WHICH HE LEFT AT 0600. END COMMENT.
ENGLE

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